

# The Texas Jewish Historical Society Magazine

June 2025



## Brilliant Brachman Dynasty by Hollace Ava Weiner



*Brachman Family, Marietta, Ohio, 1906: Eli, Ita (the stepmother,) baby Lillian, Dora, Abe, Marcus, & Sol. Credit: Fort Worth Jewish Archives.*

For a span of more than one hundred years, from 1919 well into the twenty-first century, the multi-generational Brachman family spread its leadership and philanthropy across Fort Worth, enhancing healthcare, higher education, business, classical music, and interfaith understanding. Yet today, the Brachman name is scarcely remembered. Brachman Hall, an innovative dormitory at Texas Christian

University, was demolished in 2015, and a parking garage stands in its place. The late Leon Brachman helped create the Fort Worth Symphony, lifted the Chamber Music Society into the limelight, and straightened out the Tarrant County Appraisal District during a contentious era. In the Jewish arena, oilman Sol Brachman was founding president of the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth in 1936. He helped

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## Quarterly Magazine

The Texas Jewish Historical Society Magazine is published four times annually. Stories about Texas Jewish history, oral histories, and requests for assistance with research are welcome, as are photographs and historical documents. We recommend that you provide photocopies of all documents and photographs. Please provide color photocopies or scans at 300 dpi or greater in gif, tif, or jpg format, and send electronically to [editor@txjhs.org](mailto:editor@txjhs.org) or by mail to Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

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Note: The Texas Jewish Historical Society is unable to guarantee the safe receipt and/or return of documents and photographs. It is strongly recommended that you provide color photocopies of both color and black & white documents. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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**Save the Date**  
**July 19-20, 2025**  
Summer Board Meeting - New Braunfels, Texas

# Message From the Outgoing President

by Joan Linares



I want to thank you for allowing me to lead the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the past two years. I have learned so much about Texas Jewish history and have met many wonderful people along the way who I now consider life-long friends. I will recap some of the activities of the society since our last Annual Gathering.

Our summer meeting in Round Rock focused on strategic brainstorming. Many great ideas resulted from that session. We have acted on some of the suggestions and need to implement many more of the ideas generated from that session.

In September a group of TJHS members attended the dedication of gravestones at Agudas Achim Cemetery in Dallas. This was in conjunction with a grant by Tifereth Israel Synagogue for unmarked graves. Members present included Sally Drayer, David Beer, Marilyn Lippman, Jane Manaster, Barbara and Ed Stone, and Ruben and me.

TJHS member Jeff Levine organized an event at his congregation, Temple Beth El, in Austin during the month of October. It was a Sukkot Dinner featuring the Texas Jewish Historical Society Photography Exhibit and Sheldon Lippman gave a talk about the organization.

In November we partnered with the Anti-Defamation League and the

Holocaust Museum Houston to show the Tree of Life Documentary. The TJHS quarterly meeting was held in Waco and it proved to be an outstanding meeting. We were able to see the premier of Jeff Aresty's documentary about Jacob Rafael de Cordova as well as hear from several Waco Jewish residents. Another special treat was hearing children from The Storytelling Guild.

In December, TJHS members were present at the opening of the Holocaust Museum Houston Survivors' Exhibit. This was in connection with a grant from TJHS and I was able to talk a few minutes about our organization.

Our January quarterly meeting was a Zoom meeting. In February, TJHS had a table at Yom Limmud in Houston. Membership co-chair Barbara Stone and husband, Ed, along with Shana Bauman and me visited with attendees and gave out information about TJHS. A few people joined TJHS as a result.

TJHS had a presence at the Texas State Historical Association's annual meeting in February. Hy Penn served on the program committee for TSHA. There were two sessions with Jewish content. One was a panel of survivors or descendants of survivors which included TJHS members Hy Penn and Judy Myers. Ruth Steinfeld and Bill Orlin told their survivor stories. The second panel featured Jewish archival material. This was presented by Claudia Anderson and TJHS members Melissa Cohen-Nickels and Susan Novick. TJHS member Hollace Weiner served as moderator. Hollace Weiner presented the Lynna Kay Shuffield Memorial Award to Emily Williams at the Women in Texas History Award Luncheon. Other TJHS members attending TSHA Annual Meeting were John Campbell, Sheldon Lippman, me and my husband, Ruben Linares.

In March we partnered with our friends at New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. We held a joint webinar featuring Genie Milgrom's documentary *Between the Stone and the Flower* which told her story about discovering her Jewish lineage.

April continued to be an active month for TJHS. Member Ivan Edelman arranged for us to have a booth at the Party Expo at Temple Emanu El in Dallas. Members Barbara and Ed Stone, along with Sally Drayer and Bunny Edelman took shifts at the table to spread the word about the Texas Jewish Historical Society. Making people aware of our organization is so important. Also in April, members represented us in Austin at the Real Places Conference. Claudia Anderson along with members Hollace Weiner and Melissa Cohen-Nickels spoke on Little Known Stories in Texas Jewish History using Archival Connections. The 46th Annual Gathering found us in College Station, with a stimulating program on the history of Texas A&M Hillel and the history of the Jewish community in Bryan-College Station. As you have heard, TJHS is on the move and we must continue to have a presence all over Texas.

In May we will collaborate with Holocaust Museum Houston for the screening of *A Real Pain*. TJHS will be recognized as a sponsor on the night of the event.

I would like to give an update on the Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund. The fund is now around \$195,000. We are short of the goal of \$250,000 but we hope to reach that in time. The Kessler Fund Committee has decided to provide fellowships of \$2,500 to four universities with whom we have worked with in the past...University of Texas Aus-

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## Past President Message, continued from page 4


tin Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, University of Texas Dallas Ackerman Center, Rice University Jewish Studies, and Texas A&M Jewish Studies.

Our Grants program is vital to carrying out the TJHS mission. We have given grants for the film, *Grit and Grace*; the Heritage Room at Congregation Beth Yeshurun in Houston; Texarkana Historical Society; and Museum for the Mt. Sinai Temple exhibit in Texarkana; documentary film *Two Worlds-One Path*; research on Temple Beth El and the Jewish Community of the Permian Basin; Holocaust Museum Houston Survivor Series: Liberation; and a study of Jewish Medi-

cal Philanthropy in Texas. The most recent grant is the film entitled *Dust*, which includes some Jewish history of Corsicana.

I am thrilled to hand the gavel back to Sheldon Lippman. I told Sheldon that he was robbed of holding in-person meetings during Covid. Now he will have a chance to be an in-person leader. He and John have been an enormous help to me during my presidency and I plan to stay very much involved in TJHS. I want to thank my husband, Ruben, and my family who have been most supportive of me and my devotion to Texas Jewish Historical Society.

The TJHS Officers and Board Members as well as Committee

Chairpersons. TJHS is an impactful organization because of you and the time and effort you all devote. I want to thank the outgoing officers and board members for all their hard work. Outgoing Corresponding Secretary is Bonnie Cohen. Board members whose terms are over include Martin Frost, Janice Gerber, Dolly Golden, Bob Lewis, Cindy Landauer, Allen Mondell, Ruth Nathan, Eric Nelson, Alan Selzer, Laurie Selzer, Gary Whitfield, and Sherry Zander. Welcome to the new crew. May we continue to cherish the TJHS foundation of those who came before us and be able to adapt in ways that will sustain and elevate our organization. 

## Message from the Incoming President by Sheldon Lippman



I did not expect to be writing another incoming president's remarks for *The TJHS Magazine*. But I am proud to serve once again as president and understand that I am doing so because of inconvenient timing. Many potential nominees for president and other officers were just not prepared to serve at this time due to full-time jobs, family responsibilities, and other completely legitimate reasons. I do want prospective future officers to know that being president of TJHS is

not a burden. It is an honor. And you will get much more out of serving than you will have time to put into it.

TJHS will be best served by continuing the initiatives for which our outgoing president Joan Linares has shown great diligence over the past two years.

During my term in office from 2021-2023, I appreciated the support of the Board of Trustees. At the July, 2021 Summer Meeting, the Board responded to the document that I prepared entitled Challenges Ahead for TJHS and were supportive of those ideas that capitalized on the success of TJHS' now forty-five-year history. In November, 2021, the Executive Council and Board reviewed a proposal that would upgrade the TJHS Website and offer new online functions for "doing business." Again, the Board was responsive and supportive.

At the January, 2022 Winter Meeting, the Board of Trustees took decisive action by passing the 2022

TJHS Budget, which included a substantial investment in the future of TJHS with funding for the upgraded TJHS Website. That Website introduced electronic registration and dues payment for membership, online donor forms, meetings registration and payment, and online forms for grant applications and TJHS Award nominations.

In January, 2022, following the distribution of my Challenges Ahead document, I received the following email from Rabbi Jimmy Kessler:

*Please permit me to express my heart felt mazal tov to you for the creative proposal for the future of the TJHS. It seems right and proper for the Society to move in these various directions at the same time. It is most gratifying to see that the efforts of 4+ decades ago have not only maintained our organization but have probably been the impetus for the several other groups now in-*

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## Brachman, continued from page 1

arrange an emergency \$100,000 bank loan for Israel on the eve of statehood in 1948. Ella Brachman was dubbed “the mother of Hadassah.” Her daughter, Madlyn, and her granddaughters, Laurie, Rhoda, and Debby, continued Hadassah’s healthcare advocacy in Israel as well as Fort Worth until the local chapter diminished and disappeared. The Brachmans were the backbone of the Fort Worth Hebrew Day School. They were innovators and presidents of congregations and auxiliaries. Fay Brachman launched the Fort Worth Jewish Archives in the 1990s.

Yet folks who gather in the Brachman Parlor at Congregation Ahavath Sholom for movies or mahjong are unsure for whom this congenial space was named. The passage of time has obscured the Brachmans’ roles.

The first Brachman to venture to Fort Worth was twenty-two-year-old Solomon Brachman, who arrived in 1919. He received immediate entrée to social circles by virtue of the oil “bid’ness.” He had grown up in Marietta, Ohio, surrounded by oilfield equipment—the enterprise Texans call pipe-and-supply. Marietta, located at the confluence of Ohio, West

Virginia, and Pennsylvania, produced up to a thousand barrels of shallow oil a day. With news of the oil boom in North Texas, the Brachmans dispatched Sol, the middle of five siblings, to open a Fort Worth branch of Producers Supply & Tool Company, his family’s wholesale oil-well equipment business.

Texas, where oil derricks were pumping 100,000 barrels a day, proved to be so lucrative that, one by one, the rest of the Brachman siblings gravitated to Fort Worth. Sol’s local office became company headquarters, with branches and stores in ten other Lone Star cities—Corpus Christi, Dallas, Graham, Houston, Kamay, Odessa, Olney, Palestine, Tyler, and Wichita Falls—where his youngest sister, Lillian Brachman Raimey’s husband, Sidney, managed the division.

“He was tough but fair,” said Sol’s niece Karen Raimey Kaplan, who worked several summers in her Uncle Sol’s Fort Worth office.

A self-made man who was addressed as “Mister Sol” in petroleum circles, he inspired loyalty. His employees stayed for decades. When the stock market crashed in 1929, Sol



*Sol Brachman 1896-1974. Photo courtesy Fort Worth Jewish Archives*

was on firmer ground than his wild-cattling friends, Sid Richardson and Clint Murchison, Sr. At high credit rates, he loaned equipment to Murchison, whose son founded the Dallas Cowboys football team. When Clint hit black gold, he didn’t care how high a percentage of royalties or drilling rights he owed Mister Sol.


The Brachmans trace their roots to Latvia, a Baltic nation in the Russian Empire where Jewish youths were subject to military conscription for twenty-five-year terms. Czars and dukes entrusted Jews with financial roles, such as tax collectors, money changers, and merchants. Jews lived among their own people, debating rabbinical commentaries, practicing Judaism to the nth degree, and teaching their youngsters gendered roles that had proliferated for centuries. Many women died in childbirth. Their widowed husbands remarried to guarantee that a woman was in the home to raise the children and produce more. This pattern led to inter-

## President Message, continued from page 4

*involved with preserving records of Jews in Texas. These new efforts clearly show that your selection as president was a wise and correct decision. Thanks so much.*

Another term as president is okay with me because of the support from Jimmy Kessler, the Board, and the TJHS membership. I feel strongly that TJHS is moving in the right direction toward an exciting future. This movement forward is reflected in its grants and other outreach programs, its

promotion of family stories for its Magazine, and its preservation of Texas Jewish history in Jewish archives all across this State.

I said the following in 2021 in my incoming President’s remarks and it still holds true today: “Let’s all consider how TJHS might be more efficient and effective and expansive in the years and decades ahead. I challenge TJHS members to make their voices heard about how together we continue meeting TJHS objectives.” 

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*Siblings Madlyn & Leon Brachman in Marietta, Ohio, 1929. Photo courtesy Fort Worth Jewish Archives.*

generational households where lives were closeknit and cloistered.

The first Brachman to cross the Atlantic and settle in Marietta was Sol's dad, Mendel—who anglicized his name to Marcus. Born in Jacobstadt, Latvia, in 1862, Mendel Brachman was a merchant on the Dvina River. (Coincidentally, his family

shared fishing rights with the Appleman family whose descendants live in Fort Worth today.) Mendel was twenty-four when he married Chaya Mindel Vershok. She died of a childbirth-related illness in 1904, leaving him with five children ranging in age from a toddler to a seventeen-year-old. Within a year of Chaya

Mindel's death, a matchmaker arranged a marriage between Mendel and Ita Rabinovich, a divorcee with a sharp tongue who was unable to bear children. The blended family immigrated to Baltimore in 1905, where the children's birth mother had two sisters.

The next year they relocated to Marietta, where their stepmother had a host of relatives. The Brachmans joined Marietta's small, vigorous Jewish community that grew to include thirty-five intergenerational, interwoven families. Marietta had one rabbi, two Hebrew cemeteries, a shochet available to butcher kosher meat, and an Orthodox shul, Binea Israel. Some congregants were strictly observant while others, among them the Brachmans, were "relaxed" Jews, criticized for working on Shabbat. During Mendel's first year in Marietta, he was elected to Binea Israel's board—likely because he was not a penniless immigrant. According to the manifest of the *SS Zeeland*, he arrived in America with \$5,495.

In Marietta he started a junkyard. No investment was required, only a hand-pulled wagon or a rusty wheelbarrow pushed by a young man with muscled arms. Soon, he invested in a horse and wagon, then a fenced-in yard behind his home to store scrap metal, rigging ropes, and abandoned materials to resell on credit to drillers. When fifty-year-old Mendel died in 1911, his wife, Ita—still sowing wild oats—deserted her stepchildren to marry another widower.

The self-sufficient Brachman children, glad to be rid of their "wicked stepmother," took care of each other and inherited a thriving junkyard. Dora, the oldest Brachman sibling, had married Louis "Louie" Ginsburg three years earlier. The couple, who lived 350 miles away in Casey, Illi-

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nois, moved back to Marietta to raise her orphaned siblings.

Louie, twenty-eight, teamed up with his brother-in-law Elias (Eli) Brachman, twenty, and streamlined the junkyard business. They turned a door-to-door junk-peddling operation into a promising enterprise selling oil-well supplies. In 1913 they bought Producers Supply & Tool Co. from Max and Isaac Ruby, brothers who were nephews of Ita. Louie and Eli adopted the Producer Supply company's name because it had an excellent credit rating.

When the next Brachman brother, Sol, graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1918 from Marietta College, he became a partner in the family business. Always an industrious lad, Sol as a youngster had sold popcorn at sandlot ballgames and tabulated the profits in his head. In 1919, he made his way south to Fort Worth, a cattle town transitioning into an oil-boom hub. Prospectors sinking wells met in hotel lobbies for lunch then adjourned to hotel suites to spread out geological maps and talk about mineral rights and royalties.

Sol was looking for oil, not love, in 1920 when he met Etta Louise Katzenstein, a petite, feisty Southern belle from Arkansas. An accomplished pianist who had studied at the forerunner of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Etta was in Fort Worth visiting her Uncle Dave and Aunt Carie Katzenstein Gilbert. The attraction between Sol and Etta was magnetic. Both loved to dance, which they did at their wedding under the chuppa in Marianna, Arkansas, on October 31, 1921. For the rest of Sol's life, he was fond of saying, with a twinkle in his eye, "I came from Marietta to Marianna to marry Etta."

Attending the wedding was his eldest brother, Eli, with his bride of three years, Ella Beren Brachman. (Several of Ella's relatives had moved from Marietta to Tulsa, where oil derricks and wealth were rising on the horizon.)



*Sol & Etta Brachman; Rowena Ginsburg Kimmel; Malcolm Brachman; Sam Kimmel; Abe Brachman, in front of Sol's Fort Worth home, 1950. Photo courtesy MBH Foundation.*

Among the other guests at Sol's Arkansas wedding were his sister and brother-in-law, Dora and Louie Ginsburg, who had raised the Brachman kids.

Louie and Dora Ginsburg had three brilliant sons—Harold, a chemist with a PhD and a position awaiting him in Buffalo; Nathan, a physicist with a PhD who would one day teach in Austin; and Marcus, a budding attorney born in 1915. The couple's daughter, Rowena Ginsburg (Kimmel), a graduate of Wellesley, was so smart she could complete the New York Times Sunday puzzle in forty-five minutes.

On June 14, 1934, a few days after Harold's graduation from the University of Illinois, he married Regina Elkes at the Hillel House on the Chicago cam-

pus. Following a honeymoon to Banff in the Canadian Rockies, the newlyweds returned to Marietta for a happy homecoming with his parents and hers. On July 3, the in-laws threw a small picnic thirty miles away in Pike, West Virginia, to watch drilling operations at a family gas well. Instead of witnessing an exciting spectacle, the well exploded, showering observers with flames, sparks, and scalding oil that inflicted first-and second-degree burns. For two days, Marcus shared a hospital room with his oldest brother, Harold, twenty-four, the groom who lay in and out of a coma until he died on July 5. The bride's mother lingered until July 20. The bride remained hospitalized until

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August 12, and years later remarried. The groom's father, Louie Ginsburg, suffered partial hearing loss and sold his share in Producers Supply.

Time has not softened the blow. The family's grief endures.

Louie and Dora left Marietta for Baltimore and eventually found their way to Fort Worth and a grand home on Winton Terrace in Park Hill. The Ginsburgs' youngest son, Marcus, recovered and graduated from Harvard Law in 1939. When Marcus moved to Fort Worth, Uncle Sol hired him as his personal attorney and right-hand man. Although Marcus had not specialized in oil-and-gas law, Uncle Sol was confident of his young nephew's wisdom, wit, and diplomatic skills. He escorted his nephew around the state to meet customers and clients, who addressed the oilman as "Mister Sol." Marcus, who was diplomatic and polished, ultimately served on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—UNESCO. Locally, he was president of the United Fund, the Community Council, treasurer of the Children's Museum, and a national officer of the American Jewish Committee. Among his cousins, his Yiddish nickname was "Mutt," short for *Matisyahu*, which means a gift from God.

After serving in World War II, Marcus met Martine Heilbron, a professional Red Cross field director and the daughter of a pioneer Texarkana family. The couple married at Temple Emanu-El in Dallas in 1949, and took a honeymoon cruise through the Panama Canal to Caribbean ports. On their return to Fort Worth, the newlyweds had a reception at Colonial Country Club, where Uncle Sol was a charter member.

Among those at the reception was another of Sol's brothers—Abraham Joshua Brachman—and his wife the former Sarah Ruby, both Marietta transplants. Abe, the fourth of the Brachman siblings, had lived in

Fort Worth on and off since 1919. He worked with Sol at Producers Supply, often traveling to oil-producing properties around Texas and back and forth to Marietta. Active in Zionist circles, he became a Texas delegate to the American Jewish Conference that lobbied President Truman to recognize Israel. After three terms as president at Ahavath Sholom and serving as president of the local B'nai B'rith lodge, he made up his mind to become a rabbi—but not an Orthodox one. Although he kept a kosher home, he drove on the Sabbath, Abe was an independent thinker. He received ordination in 1947 from Rabbi Stephen Wise at New York's Jewish Institute of Religion which later merged with Hebrew Union College.

The rabbinate became Uncle Abe's avocation. He led High Holy Day services for overflow crowds at Ahavath Sholom, the Orthodox shul, and summer services at Beth-El, the Classical Reform temple. "His faithful followers were stimulated, mystified, and aggravated by him," wrote a colleague. The newly ordained rabbi was too old to suffer fools.

His wife, Sarah Ruby, also a Marietta transplant, had *yichus*—the Yiddish term for lineage. She was the daughter of a revered Chabad Lubavitch rabbi, Susman Ruby, affectionately called "Zuza," meaning sweet in Yiddish. She was also the younger sister of Max and Isaac Ruby, from whom the Brachmans had purchased their oil company's corporate name. Sarah, who sang in the Beth-El choir, was a spectacular cook who grew mint, dill and other spices in her garden. At the Fort Worth Woman's Club, where her homemaking skills made her a natural, she was among the core group that organized the city's Jewel Charity Ball in 1953. "They had those dances every year," recalled her son Merom. Over the past seven decades, the Jewel Charity gala has raised more than \$82

million, insuring that children have access to high-quality health care at Cook Children's Hospital.

"All the brothers and sisters were different," said their niece Karen Raimey Kaplan. Each possessed a strong personality and a strong Jewish identity. All were brilliant. The family was full of valedictorians. Uncle Sol was by far the wealthiest. He had two children—Malcolm, born in 1926, was a nuclear physicist and a Life Master bridge player who solved complex math problems in his head. Sol's daughter, Marilyn, born in 1930, became a researcher of environmental toxins. The family lived in a red-brick Georgian house constructed in 1940. Still a landmark, the dwelling is across the street from the back nine at Colonial Country Club, where Sol served on the board—an unusual status for a Jew.

"He didn't play golf," said his nephew Merom. "Uncle Sol wanted to make an identity, not so much of wealth but of station." He was a charter member of the Fort Worth Petroleum Club in 1953 and a member of Ridglea and Shady Oaks country clubs—but not River Crest, the private club that began blackballing Jews during the Ku Klux Klan era of the 1920s.

Marilyn resided in Fort Worth until her 1958 marriage to Joe Hoffman, a molecular physiologist with a passion for red blood cells. The couple divorced in 1961 and had no children. In adulthood, Marilyn was afflicted with allergies and maladies linked to synthetic chemicals, pollutants, air flow, and contaminants. During the decade before she died in 2013 at age eighty-three, she created a nonprofit foundation. It focuses on environmental diseases and aims to feed and shelter the homeless in Fort Worth—the hometown where her immigrant father, aunts, uncles and their offspring thrived.

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# TJHS Gathers in College Station to Celebrate Heritage and History

by Marilyn Lippman

The Texas Jewish Historical Society held its 46th Annual Gathering in College Station April 25–27, 2025, bringing together scholars, community members, and history enthusiasts to reflect on the rich Jewish legacy of the Brazos Valley and beyond.

The weekend opened with an engaging presentation from Don Reiser, who recounted the roots of the Texas A&M Hillel, tracing back to 1916.

Reiser, who grew up at the Hillel where his mother Shirley Reiser served as longtime director, shared vivid memories of the warmth and connection it provided to Jewish students in a small college town.



*Ilanit Algranatti, Texas A&M Hillel Director Risa Bierman, Rachel Smet, Dylan Mandel.*

## Brachman, continued from page 8


The Marilyn Brachman Hoffman Foundation supports the Anti-Defamation League's Southwest Region, the Presbyterian Night Shelter's "Journey Home Housing," the Tarrant Area Food Bank, Unbound Now Fort Worth (which fights human trafficking), and LVT Rise, which is revitalizing an unsafe neighborhood. The MBH Foundation partners with the city's Parks & Recreation Department to plant trees and create pocket parks. It funds prairie restoration and electric current for greenhouses at the Fort Worth Nature Center. It underwrites the salary of an environmental reporter at an online newspaper, the Fort Worth Report.

The foundation gives credence to the family's legacy. It is one of the few reminders in Fort Worth of the Brachman family's century-long footprint.

### References

- The author acknowledges assistance from New York writer Michael Ruby, who is researching his family roots in Marietta and the Baltic. The working title of his unpublished manuscript is *Early*

*History of the Ruby-Travis, Beren, Grodzin, and Kobacker Families.*

- Eulogies by Beth-El Rabbi Emeritus Ralph D. Mecklenburger in memory of Etta Katzenstein Brachman, Sarah Ruby Brachman, Solomon Brachman, Marcus Ginsburg, and Martine Heilbron Ginsberg" On file in the Fort Worth Jewish Archives.
- Conversations between 2022 and 2025 with cousins Areve Brachman Alexander, Merom Brachman, Wendy Noga Brachman Fisher, Robert Ginsburg, Karen Raimy Kaplan, and Debby Brachman Rice.
- Amy Hill Siewers, "Judaism in the Heartland: The Jewish Community of Marietta, Ohio (1895-1940)," *Great Lakes Review*, Winter 1979, 24-35.
- *Oil Legends of Fort Worth*, (eds.) Jack Tunstill and Lesbia Word Roberts, Fort Worth Petroleum Club, 1993.
- Jane Wolfe, *The Murchisons: The Rise and Fall of a Texas Dynasty*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989, 93.
- Ernestine Orrick Van Buren, *CLINT—Clinton Williams Murchison*, Austin: Eakin Press, 1986, 37, 40-41, 75-77.
- Special Collections at Texas Christian University, "Solomon Brachman, Trustee" folders; "Brachman Hall" folders; "One Final Bow for Brachman," TCU 360, April 10, 2015. 

Another highlight came from Dr. William (Bill) Bassichis, who spoke passionately about the legacy of Temple Freda, the historic synagogue in Bryan. A key figure in the preservation of the building, Dr. Bassichis wove together personal experience and historical insight to show how the temple stands as a symbol of continuity and community as the City of Bryan is engaged in a renovation project to restore the building.

Longtime friends and College Station residents and TJHS members, Dena Kahan and Leslie Feigenbaum, offered a nostalgic and informative look at Jewish life in Bryan-College Station through the decades. They chronicled the evolution of Congregation Beth Shalom, giving attendees a deeply personal glimpse into the congregation's beginnings and enduring presence.

Blake Zeitman, owner of Zeitman's Grocery Store and Deli in Bryan, shared his family's immigration story from Ukraine to Maine, and how he honors that legacy through his business today. His story bridged past and present, showing the endurance of Jewish entrepreneurial spirit.

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*New Trustees and Officers—Emily Williams, Trustee; Scott Langston, 3rd VP; Sheldon Lippman, President; Jules Frapart, 1st VP; Jeff Levine, 2nd VP; John Campbell, Recording Secretary; Sally Drayer, Archivist-Historian; Trustees Melissan Cohen-Nickels, Gail Levine, Robert Markman, Amy Milstein, Barbara Green Stone. Bob and Past President Susan Zack Lewis sitting on the left.*

The significance of Jewish life at Texas A&M was further emphasized during a lively and heartwarming panel featuring former and current Aggies, who spoke of the transfor-

mative impact that Hillel had on their college years. TJHS President Joan Linares introduced the session with characteristic flair, inviting the audience to “sit back, enjoy, and get



ready to hear what Hillel looks like not just as an institution, but as a community—one that continues to shape lives and create connections in the heart of Aggieland.” She added with a wink, “Don’t worry—this will only last thirty minutes, which in Aggie terms is just one halftime show and a few ‘Howdy’ greetings.”

*Edward & Barbara Stone and Gayle Cannon at the Saturday night dinner.*



*Annual Gathering 2025 Attendees.*

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*TJHS Meeting Committee – Marilyn Lippman, Anita Feigenbaum, Lynda Furgatch.*



*Blake Zeitman tells the group how he opened his deli in Bryan and Navasota.*



*Don Reiser showing photos of previous Hillel building*



*Dena Kahan and Leslie Feigenbaum talk about growing up in Bryan-College Station.*



*Shana Bauman and Gail and Jeff Levine*

Panelists included TJHS members Mark Wormser '64 and Michael Wolf '67, along with current A&M students Dylan Mandel, Rachel Smet, and Ilanit Algranatti. Mark and Michael fondly recalled how Hillel served as their "home away from home," with former Executive Director Shirley Reiser remembered as a beloved mother figure—who somehow managed to feed, counsel, and tolerate dozens of young adults. Mark got laughs recounting marathon bridge games that stretched into the wee hours—"and then resumed the next morning, after a quick nap." That nostalgic moment took a generational turn when Rachel Smet innocently asked, "What's bridge?"—eliciting chuckles from the audience.

Michael added a romantic note, reminiscing about

*continued on page 12*





*Phyllis Berman, Martha Raskin, Sally Drayer, Jan Hart, Ellen Aresty.*



*Incoming President Sheldon Lippman "pins" Outgoing President Joan Linares with the Past President's pin.*



*Gabrielle Lyle, TJHS Grant recipient*

*Ed and Barbara Green Stone, Gayle Cannon*



*Havdalah with Michael and Lynda Furgatch.*

proposing to his wife, Cynthia, under a tree on the Hillel grounds, proving once again that Aggieland isn't just about football and traditions—it's also about love stories with strong Jewish roots. The panel closed on a high note (literally) with the Aggie War Hymn playing to rousing applause.


Saturday afternoon included a presentation from Dr. David Brenner, who introduced the newly formed Jewish Studies Program at Texas A&M University. His remarks highlighted a growing academic commitment to Jewish

**continued on page 13**

scholarship in the region.

Two TJHS grant recipients also took the stage. Emily Williams presented her striking photographic work documenting small-town synagogues across Texas, while Dr. Gabrielle Lyle shared findings from her research on Sisterhoods of the Southwest and their critical role in shaping Jewish community life in the borderlands.

With a full slate of meaningful presentations, local history, and personal storytelling, this year's Annual Gathering offered a heartfelt tribute to Jewish life—past, present, and future—in Texas.

Photographers for the Annual Gathering were Sally Drayer, Joan Linares, Marilyn Lippman, Davie Lou Solka, Barbara Green Stone, and Cynthia Wolf. 



*Sheldon Lippman begins his third term as President of TJHS.*


## Please Note:

If you are sending a check to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, please indicate the purpose of the check—dues, gift, contribution, etc.

## TJHS on Facebook

TJHS on Facebook: Search *Texas Jewish Historical Society* and “Like” us!

## From the Zoom Board Meeting Apr. 29, 2025 College Station, Texas

- There was no financial statement presented because all of the numbers needed from the Houston Community Foundation were not in.
- A \$10,000 Grant was awarded to the Full Frame Foundation in Dallas, for production of a film titled *Dust*, tracing the history of unclaimed family photographs (late 1940s to 1950s) found in an abandoned building in Corsicana, Texas.
- TJHS was a sponsor for \$250 at the Houston Holocaust Museum for a screening of the film, *A Real Pain*, on May 5, 2025.
- The Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund now has \$200,000 in it. The goal of \$250,000 is still attainable. TJHS will contribute \$2,500 each to the Jewish Studies programs at Rice University Jewish Studies, University of Texas Schusterman Center, University of Texas Dallas Ackerman Center, and Texas A&M Jewish Studies for a fellowship. This money will be used from the Kessler Fund.
- The annual report from the Briscoe Center for American History was presented and it was announced that they are using our \$5,000 annually, payable over three years, to digitize all papers for Rabbi Henry Cohen and the Galveston Movement. To date approximately 700 documents have been identified. The goal is 800 items. Digitizing has already begun and when completed, metadata will have been created and all will be ingested into the Center's collection. The third and final payment has been sent and in one year, the board will need to decide whether to continue with this project. It was decided to inquire about an intern to catalogue and identify new acquisitions. Up to \$5,000 was approved by the board for the intern.
- There are 320 known Jewish burial sites in Texas. 367 burials were added to the list this quarter.
- There have been 900 users on the web site this past quarter. 

# Abe Robinowitz and Brothers

by Joe Robinowitz

Abe Robinowitz was a strapping nineteen-year-old from Russia's vast Pale of Settlement when he stepped from the deck of the SS Vaderland along with 1,162 other passengers arriving in New York City on June 22, 1903. He spoke no English and had only \$2.50 in a pants pocket when he disembarked at Ellis Island following the long journey from Antwerp, Belgium. It did not take the visionary hard-working youngster long to realize that the Empire City was not for him.

"Where was this Land of Opportunity?" he must have wondered as he found himself packed into the city's Lower East Side with 400,000 mostly poor Jewish immigrants living, one on top of another, in tenement housing and toiling for hours over sewing machines in the low-paying, seasonal garment trade.

Time to move on, he decided within weeks of arriving in the United States. By the fall of the year, Abe had made his way from the big city to the frontier — Fort Bend County, which lay on the sultry, fertile, and mosquito-infested Texas Gulf Coast, southwest of Houston. He quickly acquired a backpack and a stock of household goods and began peddling to the tenant farmers who populated the Brazos River bottom in and around the county seat of Richmond.

"Quick to establish a lasting friendship, old Abe was put up overnight in many of the farmhouses he called on. More often than not, he was invited to a meal with the family. Those who remember him say that the grin appearing on the children's faces as he approached a farmhouse always let them know who was coming. He had time for children and some candy to give them," the *Fort Bend Herald-Coaster* reported years later.



*Robinowitz Family, circa 1908-1909 Top row: Cecil; Cira; Leon; Libby. Middle row: Bessie; Parents, J.W. & Sonia. Front row: Joe, Harry, Abe*

"After four months of peddling, I netted \$685," Abe told the *Houston Chronicle*. "I hustled to Houston, to the old T.W. House Bank, and had them send \$650 of it back to Russia to Papa. Papa was busted at the time and needed the money." Within four years, Abe had made enough to send for his four brothers, three sisters and their mom and dad. He opened a small grocery store in Richmond, expanded to Wharton, then to Beasley and Houston.

By 1926, he and his brothers formed a co-partnership, Robinowitz Brothers. The firm dabbled in land, cattle ranching, and the cotton trade, and, in the years leading up to the signing of the agreement, opened additional stores in Rosenberg, Needville, East Bernard, Kendleton, Damon, and Simonton.

When the Depression hit, the

brothers had formed business partnerships with an array of Texas ranchers, farmers, and merchants — some Jewish, some not — and their mercantile empire had grown and spread. They extended as far north as Huntsville and Madisonville, and south to Brownsville on the Mexican border. They were ringing up sales in Freeport, Clodine, Wallis, Fairchilds, and other cities and towns, and opened more stores within the Houston city limits.

Often, they would promote employees whom they found trustworthy, competent, even-handed and able to manage their stores. They would loan them funds at three percent interest so the newly minted managers could acquire their own equity interests in the operations and

**continued on page 15**



merchandise. The Robinowitz brothers “seldom find themselves the victims of misplaced judgment because they have trained the man beforehand,” Richmond’s *Texas Coaster* reported in February 1928. “By this method many a deserving clerk has found an opportunity to climb.”

In a statement issued in 1930, as the number of stores in the Robinowitz Brothers’ stable rose to thirty-two, the firm boasted that every store in its retail operation “is in every respect a part of the community in which it is located. The personnel are employed locally, and every effort is made to patronize only local industries. Regardless of where the store may be located, a percentage of the stock is owned by its manager and employees who are an integral part of the community itself. None of the so-called ‘chain store’ methods are practiced by the organization.”

The co-partnership flourished during the Depression years, when cattle and cotton became a bigger part of the operation. But the war years were even better.

In 1936, Harry Robinowitz, youngest of the five brothers, convinced the others to purchase Continental Springs Corp. (soon to be renamed Continental Silverline), a small and struggling bedsprings manufacturer, in Houston. It was the firm’s first foray into manufacturing, but the harbinger of things to come. Additional manufacturing businesses specializing in household furnishings were soon to populate the Robinowitz Brothers’ portfolio: National Furniture Manufacturing in East Bernard, Rest-Rite Products in San Antonio, Quality Kraft Products and Shastid Manufacturing both Houston-based. Soon a home appliance distribution business would join them. All of this came as soldiers began returning home from World War II, marrying at a dizzying pace, then buying and furnishing homes for their brides and Baby Boom



*National Furniture Mfg. Co., East Bernard, Texas. Photo courtesy the Peace Family, East Bernard, Texas.*



*Robinowitz Brothers – Abe, Cecil, Joe, Leon, Harry.*

offspring who were to come in the lucrative post-war years that lay ahead.

But the post-war boom would bring its share of misery to Robinowitz Brothers, too. Its esteemed and visionary leader, Abe Robinowitz, took his own life as 1945 drew to a close. He jumped from the 18th floor sunroom of the Hotel George Washington in New York City on November 13, just six months after German troops surrendered to Allied forces in Europe and three months after the United States

dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Abe was sixty-one years old at the time of his death. His son, Eli, told medical authorities that Abe suffered from manic depression, today referred to as bipolar disorder.

Squabbles broke out among the first generation of family members born in America and among their spouses, too. “People thought they could make more money outside the partnership

*continued on page 16*

than inside the partnership,” said Harry Robinowitz’s daughter, Sharon Robins Young. “They just wanted the money. They wanted the investments to go away so they could get their hands on the money. It broke my father’s heart. My father thought that family loyalty was a big deal, a very big deal.”

Within eight years of Abe’s death, two more of the five immigrant siblings who had originally founded Robinowitz Brothers would go to their graves: middle brother, Joe, in 1950, and second-oldest brother, Cecil, in 1953.

By the following decade the writing was firmly on the wall: The co-partnership was floundering and headed for liquidation. The youngest two brothers, Leon and Harry, died in 1961 and 1970, respectively. Harry’s death, by heart attack, came just as he was seeking legal advice on shutting down the forty-four-year-old business. “He looked up and took three breaths and then just fell on the floor,” his daughter Sharon said. Harry’s death came just one month after a tragic plane crash claimed the lives of Leon’s son, Louis Simon “L.S.” Robins, forty-one, his wife, Dorothy Sutton Robins, forty-one, their two young children, and a relative who was with them at the time of the accident.

L.S. was piloting the plane, a Beechcraft Bonanza, when it went down in Mexico’s Altar Desert 120 miles southwest of Yuma, Arizona on November 25, 1970. “My life is over



*Continental Silverline Products Headquarters, Houston, Texas.*

and nothing matters anymore,” wrote L.S.’s mother shortly after the deadly crash. By the time the funerals for the five plane crash victims were receding into memory, the family firm was on its last legs, and calls to dissolve the Robinowitz Brothers’ co-partnership were growing louder and louder as the days passed swiftly by.

Following a flurry of family meetings, phone calls, and reams of correspondence, the surviving family members were in agreement by late 1972 to dissolve the business. The language in the liquidation agreement was direct, succinct, and unambiguous.

“Each of the Partners is desirous of liquidating the Partnership and disposing of all of the Partnership assets and properties as soon as practicable,” the agreement read in part. “The Partners have voted to liquidate and dissolve the Partnership, wind up its affairs, and distribute its assets.”

Harry’s son, Drew Robins, took Continental Silverline off the co-partnership’s hands even before the liquidation agreement was finalized. The firm is still in business today and still run by Drew, who was only twenty-two when he acquired the asset from Robinowitz

Brothers.

The sale of some farmland in Jackson County and the big RB department stores in Richmond and Rosenberg were soon to follow. But it was not until 1996 that the final few remaining assets were spun off. These included a ninety-eight-acre parcel off Highway 36 in Rosenberg that was sold to a Houston-based limited partnership in October that year.

As the Robinowitz Brothers’ co-partnership entered its final years, the *Fort Bend Suburbia* commented, “Although their partnership has been dissolved by death, their memory remains very vivid in the form of the contributions they made, the stores they made a reality, but most important of all, the people that they helped into a better life.” Plaudits such as this one, like the confetti at a Victory Day parade, had been raining down on the family for years.

On December 20, 1951, the *Texas* (Richmond) *Coaster* reported, “The name Robinowitz Bros. has become known far and wide as one of distinction. Robinowitz Bros. are known to be definitely identified with much of the life and progress of this part of Texas, where as business successes and



*The RB Department Store in Richmond, Texas. Photo courtesy Fort Bend History Assoc., Richmond Texas*

*continued on page 17*



# Rabbi Henry Cohen

by Gregg Philipson


The mission of the Gregg and Michelle Philipson Collection and Archive, located in the Philipson home, is to find, acquire, and preserve Jewish cultural artifacts. A major focus of the collection is on the Holocaust and Jewish military history. We hope that future generations will be able to use these artifacts to learn about the achievements and struggles of the Jewish people throughout the ages.

To that end, we recently added several items that relate to Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston, Texas. Among these artifacts are philatelic items that are always of great interest as they are dated snapshots into history. We recently acquired some interesting artifacts that relate directly to Rabbi Cohen and Texas Jewish History.

One of our recent Rabbi Cohen acquisitions is a WWII/Holocaust era well-traveled re-routed handwritten envelope that was sent by Rabbi Co-

## Robinowitz, continued from page 16

builders they are known to have contributed much of their time and fortune to help make of this part of the world a happier and better place in which to live and do business. Anything that may be for the good of the community; and, the betterment of the people, find support and influence at the hands of Robinowitz Bros."

The Robinowitz family is the subject of a new book, *Abe's Way: The bold journey of a pioneer Jewish family chasing the American dream*, by Joe Robinowitz. It is available now and can be ordered on a wide variety of book-dealer websites including Barnes & Noble, Amazon, BookBaby and Walmart. 

2
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**SITUATION OF JEWISH  
COLONIES IN CRIMEA GOOD.  
ROSEN REPORTS ON RETURN  
Ukraine Colonies' Condition Continues  
Good, Reports Show**  
(Jewish Telegraphic Agency)

Moscow, Nov. 19.—The situation of  
the Jewish colonies in the Crimea is  
good, Dr. Joseph A. Rosen, head of the  
Agrojoint, declared to the representa-  
tives of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

**OTTINGER CONCEDES  
ROOSEVELT'S ELECTION**  
Attorney General Albert Ottinger,  
Republican candidate for Governor of  
New York State, conceded the victory  
to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Democrat,  
without waiting for the completion of  
the official canvass of the votes cast  
in the recent election. Mr. Ottinger  
telegraphed a message of congratula-  
tion to Governor-elect Roosevelt, at  
Warm Springs, Ga.

"Undoubtedly the final count of the  
official canvass will declare your elec-  
tion as Governor of the State of New  
York," Mr. Ottinger declared in his  
telegram. "You have my heartiest  
good wishes for a successful Adminis-  
tration as you will always have my  
full co-operation to that end."

In a statement issued from his home,  
Mr. Ottinger said: "With the official  
canvass of votes nearly completed, it is  
apparent now that the final result will  
vary but slightly from that indicated  
by the police returns a few days fol-  
lowing the election."

"For several days the result was un-  
certain, due to the difficulties attend-  
ant upon the tabulation of a million  
more votes than were cast two years  
ago. It will be remembered that, at  
that time, my ultimate election as At-  
torney General was in direct contrast  
to the indications following the elec-  
tion that I had been defeated by more  
than 100,000."

"As a matter of fact three days after  
the election my victory was indicated  
by a 3,000 plurality, this being in-  
creased by the end of the official can-

**DEDICATE HENRY COHEN  
CENTER IN GALVESTON**  
(Jewish Daily Bulletin)

Galveston, Texas, Nov. 19.—The ci-  
zenship of Galveston and the state  
of Texas paid its honors, yesterday to  
Dr. Henry Cohen, Rabbi of Temple  
B'nai Israel for more than forty years,  
in the dedication of the Henry Cohen  
Community House erected by members  
of his congregation. Catholic priests,  
Protestant ministers and colleagues  
from other cities united with the laity  
in expressing appreciation of the hu-  
manitarian and cultural services of  
Dr. Cohen, not only to the Jews of  
Galveston but the Jews of Texas and  
the nation.

Dr. Henry Ettinger, Professor of  
Mathematics of the University of  
Texas, conferred upon Dr. Cohen the  
title of "Master architect of human  
souls" in his address. Adrian F. Ley  
termed him the "outstanding Rabbi of  
the United States." Rev. Marius Cha-  
taignon, Rector of Sacred Heart  
Church brought the felicitations of  
the members of his church. J. K. Hexter  
of Dallas, Rabbi Henry Barnston of  
Houston, Rabbi Ephraim Frisch of  
San Antonio, were among the speak-  
ers. I. H. Kempner presided.

John Neethe, vice president of the  
congregation, presented Dr. Cohen.  
The key of the Community House was  
given to Robert Cohen, president of  
congregation.

"Assurance for the perpetuation of  
Judaism for the generations of the fu-  
ture was given by the erection of the  
Henry Cohen Community House," de-

Article from New York Jewish Daily Bulletin, November 20, 1928.

hen of Temple B'nai Israel in Galveston to U.S. Army Pvt. John Neethe, Jr. (U.S. Army (serial number 38051024) of Galveston. Neethe's father was the Vice-President of Temple B'nai Israel. Rabbi Cohen must have been traveling as the envelope is from a Kansas Hotel, but the August 6, 1943, post office postmark was from Boulder, Colorado. There are two postmarks (front and rear) from the U.S. Army Directory Service as they were trying to find Neethe as he moved from location to location. The back of the envelope has November 1943; January 1943; and February 1944 markings. The Hutson Hotel Kansas envelope has a "Buy United States War Savings Bonds and Stamps" cachet on the back. The pasted address label shows a DSCH (dispatched or discharged) 3129 Avenue H, Galveston, Texas.

Can you imagine that this piece of mail traveled over one year until it reached its final destination? If anyone knows more about this address

and/or the Neethe family, we would appreciate hearing from you. John Neethe, Jr.; born October 27, 1918, Galveston, Texas; Died March 9, 1975 (age 56), Dallas Texas; buried, Laurel Land Memorial Park, Dallas, Tx. I was able to locate a November 20, 1928, article from the New York *Jewish Daily Bulletin* that mentions Rabbi Cohen and John Neethe, Sr.

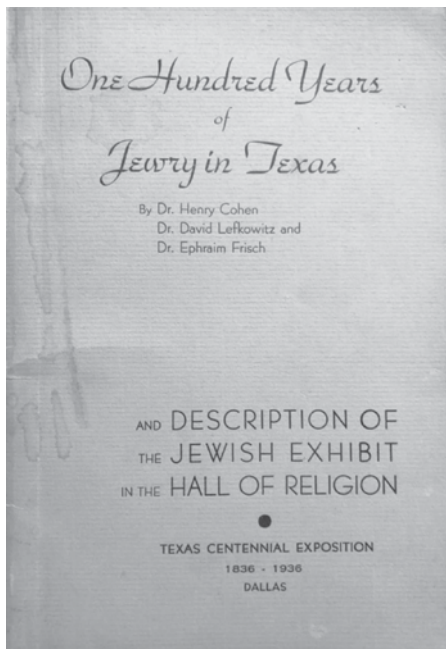
From the *Jewish Daily Bulletin*:

"The Citizenship of Galveston and the state of Texas paid its honors, yesterday to Dr. Henry Cohen, Rabbi of Temple B'nai Israel for more than forty years in the dedication of the Henry Cohen Community House erected by members of his congregation. Catholic priests, Protestant ministers, and colleagues from other cities united with the laity in expressing appreciation of the humanitarian and cultural services of Dr. Cohen, not only to the Jews of Galveston, but the Jews of Texas, and the nation."

continued on page 18



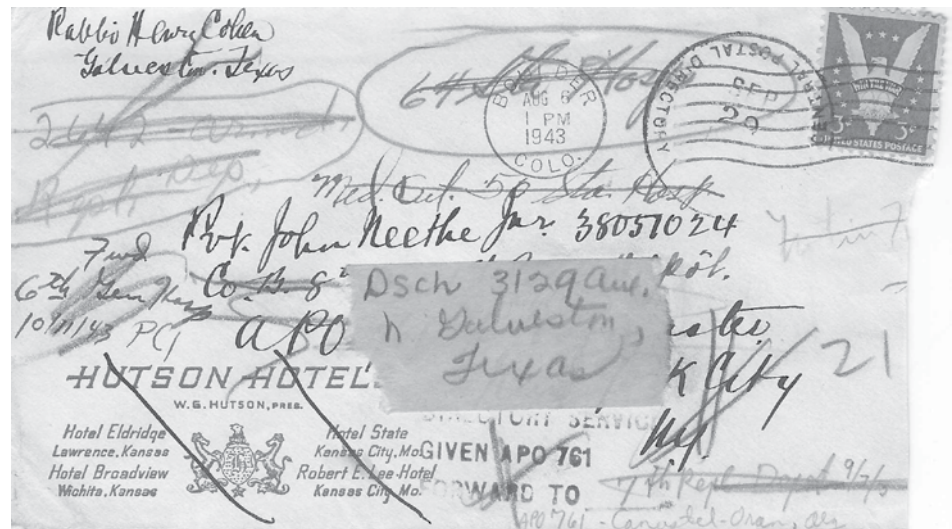
Dr. Henry Ettlinger, Professor of Mathematics of the University of Texas, conferred upon Dr. Cohen the title of “Master architect of human souls” in his address. Adrian F Levy termed him the “outstanding Rabbi of the United States.” Rev. Marius Chataignon, Rector of Sacred Heart Church brought the felicitations of the members of his church. J.K.



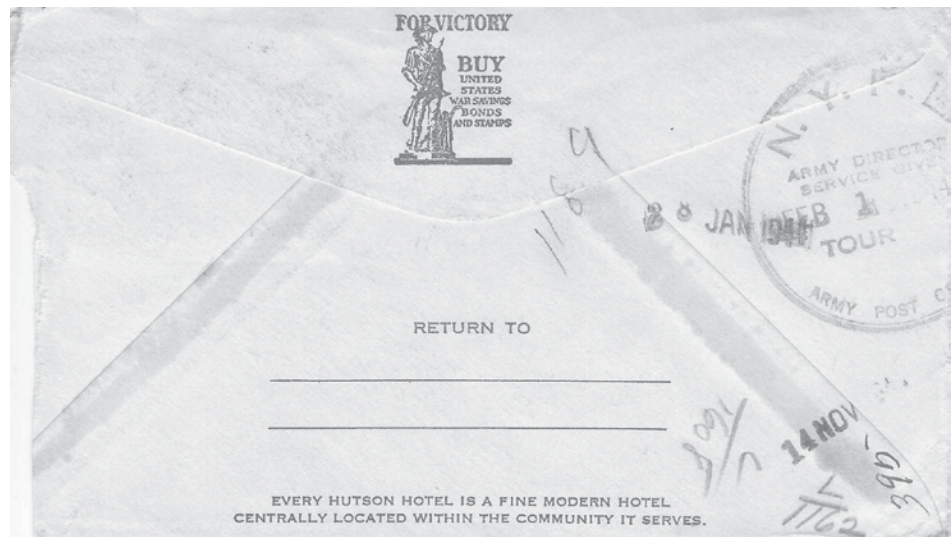
*Booklet prepared for Texas Centennial Exposition in 1936, in Dallas, Texas.*

Hexter of Dallas, Rabbi Henry Barnston of Houston, and Rabbi Ephraim Frisch of San Antonio were among the speakers. I.H. Kempner presided.


Another item also from the Holocaust era is a first edition booklet



*Front and back of envelope addressed to Pvt. Neeth, Jr.*




titled *100 Years of Jewry in Texas*, by Dr. Henry Cohen and others. The booklet was prepared by the Jewish Advisory Committee for the Texas Centennial Religious Program in 1936. It was published for the Texas

Centennial Exposition (1836-1936) in Dallas, Texas, and has a description of the Jewish exhibit in the Hall of Religion. This is another example of the important role the Jewish people played in Texas history. 

## Mazel Tov

**Mel Eichelbaum** on the play that he co-authored with Lee Markman. “Mah Jongg is Murder” opened at the Overtime Theater in San Antonio on January 11, 2025. It was well received and ran on week-ends until February 1. **Jo Reingold**, who was installed as President of the Dallas Jewish Historical Society May, 20, 2025.

**Steven Solka**, who was installed as Commander of Dr. Harvey J. Bloom Jewish War Veterans Post #256 in Dallas on January 12, 2025.

**Audrey Kariel** for receiving the inaugural Audrey D. Kariel Lifetime Achievement Award from the Marshall Historic Landmark Preservation Board in Marshall, Texas, on May 18, 2025. (See article on page 27.) 

# New Jewish Studies Program at Texas A&M

by Davie Lou Solka

*Information for this article obtained from Texas A&M Global Studies web site and a program presented by Dr. David Brenner at the Texas Jewish Historical Society Annual Gathering, April 19, 2025.*

The College of Arts and Sciences at Texas A&M in College Station, TX, announced the creation of a new Jewish Studies program. The program is housed within the Department of Global Languages and Cultures, and its director is Dr. Ashley Passmore. Dr. David Brenner, lecturer in Global Languages and Culture, presented a program at the Annual Gathering of the Texas Jewish Historical Society explaining the new program and answering questions. The program began with the spring semester, 2024.

The program is due to the efforts of former students Donald Zale ('55) and Gerald Ray ('54) who were also members of the Corps of Cadets. The process took six years to completion


with the aid of Dr. Passmore.

Exciting plans are ahead for students with the opportunity to take part in the new program. Studies abroad include trips to Israel, and an excursion in 2026 to Morocco. The goal of the program is to be #1 in the United States for sending Jewish Studies students abroad. The faculty has been active in hosting events with both outside lecturers and Texas A&M faculty since the launch in 2024. The goal is to have three or more courses taught per semester with the current faculty by 2026. Another goal is to create a recurring postdoctoral position in Jewish Studies teaching and research. The aim is to use shared resources between Jewish Studies and other departments in the different colleges. Future courses will focus on cinema, philosophy, archaeology, communication, Hebrew, and more.

"As an educator, I'm excited to have the resources of a formal Jew-




*Dr. David Brenner, Lecturer, Global Languages & Cultures, presenting information about Texas A&M new Judaic Studies program to TJHS Annual Gathering attendees.*

ish Studies program to elevate people who are working in this field, and get the visibility they otherwise would not have," said Dr. Passmore. "This is not just for Jewish students. It is for people of all backgrounds." 

## Real Places Conference, Austin, Texas

by Melissa Cohen-Nickels M.Ed.

Curator, Joan and Stanford Alexander, South Texas Jewish Archives

At the Real Places Conference in Austin, Texas, held on April 25, 2025, members of the Texas Jewish Historical Society proudly represented the Jewish communities of the Texas Triangle. Claudia Anderson, Melissa Cohen-Nickels, and Hollace Ava Weiner presented a compelling panel titled Little Known Stories in Texas Jewish History using Archival Connections. Drawing on materials from the LBJ Library, the South Texas Jewish Archive, and the Dallas Jewish Historical Society, the panel explored powerful narratives of Jewish life in Texas during and after World War II. Anderson discussed the role of the National Youth Administration in aiding Jewish refugees. Cohen-Nickels shared the story of Adele Heyman, who chaired the Refugee Service Committee of Houston's Jewish Community Council. Weiner brought to light the journey of the Kokotek sisters, Holocaust orphans who resettled in Fort Worth in 1941. Together, their presentations underscored the vital role of archives in uncovering and preserving the rich, often overlooked stories of Texas Jewish history. 



*Hollace Weiner, Claudia Anderson, Melissa Cohen-Nickels*

## FROM OUR ARCHIVES

# The War Against White Slavery

by Vickie Vogel

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**This column is based on information available in the TJHS archives, supplemented by some online research. If you have corrections or additions to this information, please submit them in writing to the TJHS editor at [editor@txjhs.org](mailto:editor@txjhs.org). We want the TJHS archives to be as complete and accurate as possible.**

---

When Rabbi Henry Cohen heard a girl was being held against her will in the Red Light district of Galveston, he jumped on his bicycle and headed to the establishment of the number one madam in town. He burst into a room, found the girl, whose clothes had been taken from her, and wrapped her in a blanket snatched from the bed. He marched her out of the house and, holding his bicycle with one hand while gripping her in the other, he headed up the street. Stopping at the first clothing store he passed, he ordered the startled clerk to outfit her from head to foot. Rabbi Cohen then led the girl to his home, and found her a job.<sup>1</sup>

Our archives are full of stories like this in the notes of Texas Jewish historian Ruthe Weingarten. The fight against prostitution, especially forced prostitution, often called “white slavery,” was important in the early 20th century. As late as World War I, men lured new arrivals by posing as relatives, and then pressed the girls,

promised with jobs, into prostitution. As a port of entry for immigrants, Galveston found itself in the forefront as a distribution point for Jewish prostitutes from Europe and South America.<sup>2</sup>

In the early 1900s, criminality was popularly associated with foreignness. Some journalists and public officials promoted the idea that

“white slavery” was a system of corrupt procurers, mostly Jews, who seduced young immigrant women, also mostly Jews, and sold them into a life of degradation.<sup>3,4</sup>

Rabbi Cohen was active in the struggle to help these young women. When a madam asked him to say the burial service over a girl who, in dying, had requested a decent Christian



*Judge Henry J. Dannenbaum. Harris Co. archives.*

**continued on page 21**



## War Against White Slavery, continued from page 20

funeral, he didn't ask if others had refused or if she had even asked a minister. He just went to the cemetery and performed the rites with New Testament prayers.

The story is told of a young woman forced into prostitution taken by Rabbi Cohen as a guest into his own home when he could find no place for her to live safely. She lived with the Cohen family as a respectable boarder for some six months, despite protests from shocked congregants.<sup>5</sup>

Weingarten's notes tell of one Jewish prostitute who came to Galveston from Houston periodically. Her family disowned her. Rabbi Cohen sent this woman back to Houston two or three times, putting her on the train himself, but she would return. One Rosh Hashanah she was in a terrible auto accident with a prominent Galveston Jewish man and her face was scarred. Gossips whispered she was "marked" for her bad behavior. She later married a man from Fort Worth and they raised a family. Her mother forgave her, but her father never did.

Weingarten's notes also reference a 1907 letter from Rabbi Cohen to the Texas Brewery Association asking for help to get one Bessie Rosen and her pimp out of the city, and other Jewish prostitutes out of Galveston, but the notes are garbled.

Around 1986, Ellen Mack gave a paper at a TJHS meeting on the problem,<sup>6</sup> stating many young Jewish women were brought to the United States with promises of an education by Jewish male "white slavers." The National Council of Jewish Women tried to intercept women at the port and help them get settled, but there was no NCJW chapter in Galveston in this period (1907-1914).

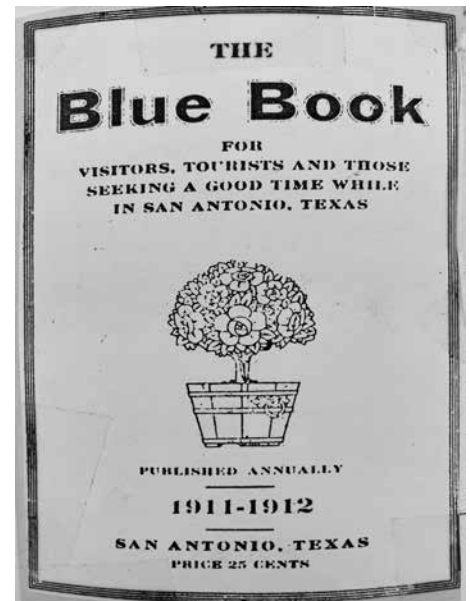
In El Paso, Rabbi Martin Zielonka caused some fourteen unfortunate women to be deported back to Eastern

Europe when he reported them to the authorities. The Jewish community in Texas was working to fit into American society and considered prostitution a threat to their status.

In Fort Worth, Rabbi George Fox felt a responsibility and joined the battle, hoping to clean out the red light district, "Hell's Half Acre." Some of the women who ended up in Fort Worth may have been stopped at Cleburne and met by men who took them to Fort Worth. After getting the nod from the mayor and police chief, Fox sent word to brothels saying they were only after the Jewish girls. Fox invited them to his office. Several heeded the call, and he had the rest arrested for disorderly conduct. Visiting them at the jail with Yiddish-speaking interpreters, they told the Rabbi it was the only way they could earn a living and support their parents or children in foster homes, and asked him to find them jobs. "The stories we heard were tragic," he said. The women lamented that local women's groups would not help them.

Fox suggested it would be better if the women left town, and most did. Mack notes two Jewish girls who married their Jewish pimps, remained in Fort Worth and "became respectable." "... (W)hether we were right or not we breathed a little more easily." Fox said.<sup>7</sup> "As rabbi, I could not and would not escape the responsibility that was mine in this shameful business," Fox wrote. "It was a drab affair."<sup>8</sup>

Mack writes that Rabbi Fox was ahead of his time in the area of human and civil rights. For example, he successfully lobbied that Blacks working in the World War II Liberty Bond drive be allowed to eat lunch with the rest of the workers in Fort Worth.<sup>9</sup> When asked why he only campaigned against the Jewish prostitutes, he advised the ministers to round up the



*Cover of The Blue Book, a 1911-1912 guide to "sporting" life in San Antonio. Found in Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University.*

gentiles themselves. Eighteen young Jewish women were deported to Europe just before the outbreak of World War I.<sup>10</sup>

In San Antonio, a Blue Book was printed annually as a guide to the city "after the shades of night" fell for those looking for "clinking glass, sports, and good fellowship" in the "sporting district... This is the boundary within which the women are compelled to live according to law." The Blue Book even tells you which street cars to take. One saloon touts it can "quench any kind of a thirst." There are lists titled "Directory of Houses and Women," separated by A, B, and C categories.<sup>11</sup>

While some parts of the country downplayed the problem, prosecuting attorney Henry Joseph Dannenbaum became a leading advocate against white slavery in the Houston area. Born in 1871 in East Columbia, Texas to Pvt. Joseph "Joe" (CSA)<sup>12</sup> and Sarah Rosenfield Dannenbaum, he

**continued on page 22**

was a leading Houston civic figure for forty years. He served on the school board from 1904-1907, and was elected president of the Jewish Literary Society of Houston<sup>13</sup> in 1907. He served as president of Beth Israel, and in 1908 spoke on Yom Kippur of the importance of enforcing spiritual duties.<sup>14</sup> He was an early national leader of the U.S. Zionist movement,<sup>15</sup> and became known as an outspoken critic of international prostitution rings involving young immigrant women.

In 1909, the B'nai B'rith district convention formed committees to seek legislative suppression of white slavery. The next year, \$5000 was collected to pursue this goal. Other districts made similar efforts, but District 7, covering several Southern states including Texas,<sup>16</sup> was most effective.

In 1910, Dannenbaum wrote a letter to the *Jewish Herald* proposing a different approach to the white slavery problem. Rather than downplaying the existence of the problem, attack it directly through prosecution, intervention, and public education. Any other response demonstrates moral weakness. He had met with Samuel London, an El Paso lawyer who defended prostitutes and procurers throughout the area and claimed expertise on the subject. London offered his records to federal investigators and Dannenbaum raised the money to purchase them. These records furthered Dannenbaum's appointment as Special Assistant to the Attorney General in New York.<sup>17</sup>

Dannenbaum was elected B'nai B'rith District 7 President in 1911, but he declined to serve because of his commitment in New York. Dannenbaum was criticized by northerners who objected to his outspoken approach to the problem, which led to dissension between northern and southern Jewish leaders, sometimes

referred to as a Jewish Civil War. District 7 defended him vigorously. Later events drew northern leadership to Dannenbaum's position.<sup>18</sup>

Dannenbaum went to Washington to confer with the Attorney General, who agreed to organize a special section in the Justice Department if Dannenbaum would live in New York for six months to organize the effort. Congress passed the Mann Act, which made it illegal to transport a woman across state lines for immoral purposes. Dannenbaum worked in Washington for a year as a Special Assistant in the Justice Department to enforce it.<sup>19</sup> He brought a number of violators to justice, before returning to his law practice in Houston.

In 1915 he was appointed by Governor James Ferguson as Judge of the 61st District Court, where he served until 1919. Dannenbaum was the first Jew to sit on the state bench in Texas.<sup>20</sup> He was known as an educated man "with a frontiersman's directness" using bold, confrontational messages in a cultivated manner "that marked him as a true Houstonian, ambitious and capable."<sup>21</sup> He died in 1940.<sup>22</sup> His portrait was the only one excluded in the 1938 judicial portrait project honoring all the judges of Harris County, perhaps because the chairman of the committee was the former Imperial Dragon of the KKK's Houston Chapter. The exclusion was discovered and corrected in 1997.<sup>23</sup>

The Mann Act is still federal law and can be used to prosecute sex workers and human traffickers. Because the original act was somewhat ambiguous in its language and was used to criminalize consensual behavior between adults, it was amended by Congress in 1978 and 1986 to limit its application to transport for the purpose of prostitution.

Noted Jewish radical and feminist Emma Goldman observed,

"Whether our reformers admit it or not, the economic and social inferiority of woman is responsible for prostitution."<sup>24</sup> Young women alone in a strange country faced obstacles on many fronts, and were often forced to make untenable choices. Much of the organized Jewish community struggled to find the appropriate response. Rabbi Henry Cohen, however, always championed the young women caught in the web of white slavery.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all information is from Box 3J160, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, folder Jewish Prostitutes Notes 1988-1991.
- <sup>2</sup> Ruthe Weingarten and Cathy Schechter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews*, Eakin Press, 1990, p. 118.
- <sup>3</sup> George Kibbe Turner, "The Daughters of the Poor," *McClure's Magazine* 34 (November 1909): 45-61. Accessed [https://www.jewishsouth.org/system/files/sjh\\_v.\\_7\\_2004\\_stone.pdf](https://www.jewishsouth.org/system/files/sjh_v._7_2004_stone.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> Galveston journalist Rosella Werlin did a story on the Red Light District in Galveston. See "Rambling Round with Rosella," Vickie Vogel, *TJHS Magazine*, May 2015, p. 17.
- <sup>5</sup> Hollace Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Brandeis University Press, 2007, p. 88
- <sup>6</sup> According to Weingarten's notes, but I could find no record of it in our magazine.
- <sup>7</sup> Stanley F. Chyet, ed., *Lives and Voices*, Philadelphia, 1972, pp 279-280. Found in Box 3J160 op cit.
- <sup>8</sup> Hollace Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas*, Texas A & M University Press, 1999, Chapter 5, "Cowtown's Front-Page Rabbi," p. 80.
- <sup>9</sup> Mack, op cit.

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## War Against White Slavery, continued from page 22

- <sup>10</sup> Weiner, op cit. p. 81
- <sup>11</sup> <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/33195500>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/101778326/joseph-dannenbaum>, [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/101358587/henry\\_joseph-dannenbaum](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/101358587/henry_joseph-dannenbaum)
- <sup>13</sup> See Vickie Vogel, "The Jewish Literary Society of Houston," *TJHS Magazine*, December 2015, p. 12.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Jewish Herald*, October 8, 1908.
- <sup>15</sup> [https://houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/landmarks/16L314\\_Rosenbaum\\_House\\_5219\\_S\\_Braeswood\\_ACTION.pdf](https://houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/landmarks/16L314_Rosenbaum_House_5219_S_Braeswood_ACTION.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> <http://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms0180/ms0180.html>
- <sup>17</sup> Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1870-1939* (New York, 1983), p. 271, [https://www.jewishsouth.org/system/files/sjh\\_v\\_7\\_2004\\_stone.pdf](https://www.jewishsouth.org/system/files/sjh_v_7_2004_stone.pdf), p. 91.
- <sup>18</sup> Bryan Edward Stone, "Edgar Goldberg and the Texas Jewish Herald: Changing Coverage and Blended Identity," *Jewish South*, ibid. pp 91-96.
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.isjl.org/texas-houston-encyclopedia.html>
- <sup>20</sup> <http://archives.library.rice.edu/repositories/2/resources/1170>
- <sup>21</sup> p. 90
- <sup>22</sup> findagrave op cit.
- <sup>23</sup> *Jewish South*, op cit., p. 93.
- <sup>24</sup> Goldman, Emma (1972). Kates Shulman, Alix (ed.). *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches*. New York City: Random House. ISBN 978-0-394-47095-5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mann\\_Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mann_Act)



## Meet Your Board

**Sheldon Lippman**, TJHS President, grew up in Schulenburg and attended the University of Texas, Austin, where he earned a Bachelor of Journalism degree. He began his communications career in Washington, D.C., working at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (1975-81). He returned to UT/Austin to get a M.A. in TV-Film and was media director for Keep Texas Beautiful (1984-87). He returned to Washington where he worked at the National Academy of Sciences on a PBS science documentary series and for the next thirty-plus years at the World Bank as a writer/editor. Sheldon returned to Austin in 2017 to "semi retire." He served TJHS as President 2021-2023.



**Scott Langston**, 3rd Vice-President, retired from Texas Christian University where he taught for nearly twenty years, and was the university's inaugural Native American Nations and Communities Liaison and Instructor in Religion. He has worked extensively with Native American communities, as well as researching and publishing widely in the fields of Southern Jewish History and the reception history of the Bible. Scott is a past president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society and the current editor for the Primary Sources section of the journal, *Southern Jewish History*. While doing graduate work in the field of ancient Near Eastern Archaeology he travelled to Israel many times, including excavating four seasons at Tel Beth Shean and Tel Batash (Timnah.) The Southern Jewish Historical Society awarded him the Samuel Proctor Award for Outstanding Career Scholarship in Southern Jewish History. He received TCU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award, and Plume Award for his work in the university's Native American and Indigenous Peoples Initiative. Scott was born in Fort Worth, but grew up in Conroe, TX. He is married with three children and two grandsons, and currently lives in Weatherford, Texas.



**John P. Campbell**, Recording Secretary and Chair of the Grant Committee lives in Austin. He received a B.A. from Tulane University and a M.P.A from the LBJ School at UT-Austin. In 1984-1986 he was on the staff of the Texas Select Committee on Higher Education. In 1987-2004 he was a staff member of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC. In 2005 he became the Executive Director of the Inter-Academy Council in Amsterdam, Netherlands. He retired from this position in 2014.

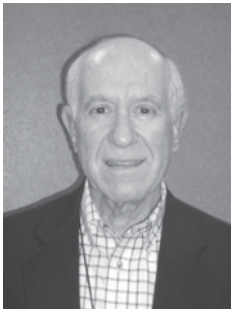


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## Meet Your Board, continued from page 23

**Ben Rosenberg**, Treasurer, was born and grew up in El Paso. He attended the University of Texas/Austin, and graduated with a B.B.A in Accounting in 1967. After graduation he moved to Houston and joined a CPA firm until his retirement in 2015. Ben is a past chairman of the Houston Jewish Community Foundation, and serves on the board of other charitable organizations based in Houston. He is married to Barbara, Past President of TJHS. They enjoy travelling when they can. They have a daughter and two grandsons living in Boulder, Colorado.



Barbara, Past President of TJHS. They enjoy travelling when they can. They have a daughter and two grandsons living in Boulder, Colorado.



**Vickie Vogel**, lives in Austin and is a Past President of TJHS (2006-2008). She has visited all seven continents and all fifty states. She is a retired attorney who practiced primarily criminal law. She enjoys baseball, travel, needlework, and reading, and serves as Parliamentarian.



**Sally Drayer**, Historian-Archivist, is from Dallas, and is a Past President of TJHS (2008-2010). She grew up in Alice, and has three children and one granddaughter. Sally is a substitute teacher at a private Jewish day school. She volunteers at the Dallas Museum of Art for the Arts and Letters Live Program, is on the board of

the Dallas Symphony Orchestra Guild, and is a substitute teacher for a private Jewish school.

**Robert Markman** is from Houston and became interested in Texas Jewish History when he discovered that his great-grandfather arrived in Galveston in 1907, with the assistance of Rabbi Henry Cohen. He works in the insurance industry and enjoys restoring classic cars. He also manages the historical buildings that were owned by his father, and is proud to say that his family



has been in Texas for close to 125 Years.

**Kathy Hart** is a second generation TJHS board member, following in the footsteps of her parents, Charles z"l and Jan Hart and serves as a proof-reader on The TJHS Magazine. Kathy's family goes back three generations in Texas, and she is proud to have one set of great-grandparents that immigrated through the Galveston Movement. Kathy graduated from TAMU and LSU (MLIS), and had a full career as a librarian/ manager, specializing in historic and scientific maps, and scholarly research and publishing,



working at libraries at Texas A&M, Rice University and the Library of Congress. Kathy raised two children in College Station, and served on the Texas A&M Hillel Corporate Board. She is retired, lives in Maryland and enjoys traveling and delving into her family genealogy. 🇺🇸

## We Need Your Stories!

The Texas Jewish Historical Society would like to print your story if you or your family immigrated to the United States from the former Soviet Union, South Africa, India, or other countries. We have received many stories—and still want to include them—from families who immigrated during the earlier part of the twentieth century, but realize that our beautiful Texas history is much more than those stories. Help us tell the rest of the story and contact [editor@txjhs](mailto:editor@txjhs) if you will include your family's history in *The TJHS Magazine*. 🇺🇸

# Are you benefiting from the **Members-Only Dashboard** on the TJHS Website?

Whether you renew your TJHS membership by writing a check or using a credit card online, if you are in the TJHS Membership Database, you can access the **Members-Only Dashboard**.

Easy access: Click on **Website-Registered Members Login** on the home page at [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org)

- In the sign-in box, enter **Email and Password**
- Forgot or never had a password? Email [admin@txjhs.org](mailto:admin@txjhs.org)

## What will you find on the **Members-Only Dashboard?**

- View and search the **TJHS Members Directory**
- View and edit **My Member Profile** - Check your name/contact as is appears in the TJHS Directory
- View **My Membership Details** - See your history of renewal payments and next due date
- **Renew My Membership** - click to pull up renewal form for credit card use. Check writers will find a printable form under Membership on the Home Page.

### Committee Chairs 2025-2026

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Awards</i>                                    | Shana Bauman  |
| <i>Cemetery</i>                                  | Rusty Milstein  |
| <i>Cemetery Research</i>                         | Kathy Kravitz   |
| <i>Dolph Briscoe Center for American History</i> | Davie Lou Solka                                       |
| <i>Finance</i>                                   | Ben Rosenberg   |
| <i>Grants</i>                                    | John Campbell   |
| <i>Kessler Fund</i>                              | Joan Linares  |
| <i>Legal</i>                                     | Lonnie Schooler                                       |
| <i>Meetings</i>                                  | Lynda Furgatch, Anita Feingenbaum,<br>Marilyn Lippman |
| <i>Membership/Publicity</i>                      | Barbara Green Stone, Jeff Levine                      |
| <i>Nominations</i>                               | Joan Linares  |
| <i>The TJHS Magazine/Publications</i>            | Davie Lou Solka                                       |
| <i>Speaker's Bureau</i>                          | Gayle Cannon, Jan Siegel Hart                         |
| <i>Photo Exhibit</i>                             | Dolly Golden  |
| <i>Website/Technology</i>                        | John Campbell   |

### Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund Contributions

The following donations have been received in the Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund:

#### **Sapphire**

Patty & Larry Falek

#### **Ruby**

In memory of Charles B. Hart  
Sam Roosth

#### **Diamond**

In honor of Scott's Langston's new grandson  
Rusty Milstein

# Dallas Party Expo



*Bunny Edelman, Sally Drayer, Barbara Stone representing TJHS at Temple Emanu-El Brotherhood, Dallas Party Expo. April 6, 2025. Photo by Ivan Edelman.*

## In Memoriam



**Tobye Fram Joachim**, TJHS member, died April 5, 2025, in Houston. She grew up in Goose Creek, now Baytown, Texas. She is survived by her husband, Mort Joachim; children, Jeff (Kimberly) Joachim; Karen (Steve) Finkelman-Hasson Linda (Curtis) Kantor; seven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

**Reba Eskowitz Magids**, TJHS member, died February 19, 2024 in Houston. She is survived by her children, Mac (Danieanne) Magids, Shelly (Steve) Brodie, four grandchildren and their spouses, and ten great-grandchildren; sisters-in-law, Judy Magids and Jan Magids, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

*May their memories be a blessing.*



## Welcome New Members!

**Dr. David Brenner**  
College Station, Texas

**Dr. Anat Geva**  
College Station, Texas

**Sherrie Grunfeld**  
Dallas, Texas

**Harriett Katzeff**  
Houston, Texas

**Jeffrey Markman**  
Houston, Texas

**Susan Turner-Lowe and Carla Mazzio**  
Pasadena, California

**Jim Goldman and Susan Monty**  
Sugar Land, Texas

**Sue Pfeffer**  
Lakeway, Texas

**Catherine and Rabbi Adam Ruditsky**  
Plano, Texas

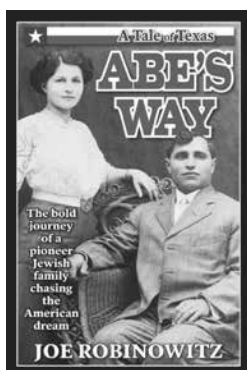
**Richard Schechter**  
Houston, Texas

**Fredell and Dr. Allan Shulkin**  
Dallas, Texas

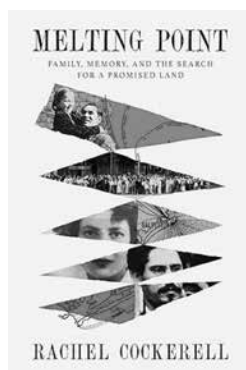
**Rabbi Joseph Topek**  
South Setauket, New York

**Richard Wolf**  
Houston, Texas

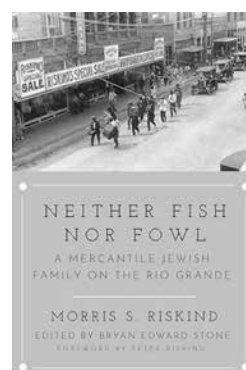
## Books to Read



*Abe's Way: the bold journey of a pioneer Jewish family chasing the American dream, by Joe Robinowitz. Available at various bookdealer website including Barnes and Noble, Amazon, BookBaby and Walmart.*



*Melting Point: Family, Memory, and the search for a Promised Land, by Rachel Cockerell. The story of Rachel's great-grandfather, who lead a group of Russian Jews to sail to Texas and Galveston. Available on Amazon.*



*Neither Fish nor Fowl: A Mercantile Jewish Family on the Rio Grande, by Morris Riskind, Edited by Dr. Bryan E. Stone. Available on Amazon*



# Audrey Kariel Receives Lifetime Historical Preservation Award


by Davie Lou Solka

Audrey D. Kariel, long-time TJHS member, received the inaugural Audrey D. Kariel Lifetime Achievement Award from the Marshall Historic Landmark Preservation Board on May 18, 2025, at a ceremony in Marshall, Texas. This award recognizes a lifetime of dedication to public service and historical preservation in Marshall.

Audrey, along with others, was instrumental in making Marshall the city it is today. She was elected to the City Council in 1991 and served as the first woman mayor from 1994-2001. In addition, she served on the Harrison County Historical Commission and chair of the Texas Historical Commission. Many fund-raising projects in Marshall were the results of Audrey's efforts, including the construction of the Marshall Public Library, and the construction of the then-Marshall Civic Center Auditorium. She led the celebration of Marshall's 150th birthday celebration in 1991 and was instrumental in the restoration of the 1901 historic Harrison County Courthouse.



*The Audrey D. Kariel Lifetime Achievement Award*

our flaws, we've had problems in the past and things that we're not really proud of, but people in Marshall know how to love their neighbor." 


Her late husband, Louis Kariel, Jr., was by her side throughout her endeavors and the two of them helped renovate the T&P Passenger Station and establish a museum in the building, saving it from demolition. They owned the Hub Shoe Store, a family-owned business that was over one hundred years old.

Audrey Kariel now lives in the Dallas area, and says, "All in all, Marshall is still one of the best places in the world; we had

## TJHS Photo Exhibits

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has three museum quality photo exhibits, with explanations depicting early Jewish life and contributions. The exhibits highlight the lives of Jews in Texas since the early part of the century.

Each exhibit is comprised of approximately thirty-six photographs that can either be self-standing with an easel back or hung on a wall. There is no charge for the exhibits and they will be shipped prepaid freight via UPS in waterproof boxes to your location. There will be the expense of prepaid freight back to the shipper via UPS ground.

The exhibits have been displayed in various locations in Texas and other parts of the United States, including Rhode Island and California. They are an excellent program for schools, congregations, and other organizations. To schedule the exhibits, please contact [txjhs\\_exhibits@txjhs.org](mailto:txjhs_exhibits@txjhs.org). 



## Contributions

The following donations have been received by the Texas Jewish Historical Society:

Gift membership to Catherine & Rabbi Adam Ruditsky  
from David Kaplan

## Does TJHS Have Your Current Email Address?

Does TJHS Membership have your current email address? You can check your Member Profile on the Members-only Dashboard for your current mailing and email addresses. Go to Website-Registered Members Login on TJHS Website. If you cannot remember your password or have other questions, send an email query to [admin@txjhs.org](mailto:admin@txjhs.org)



# The TJHS is Accepting Nominations for Two Outstanding Recognition Awards for the Preservation of Texas Jewish History

Texas Jewish Historical Society (TJHS), founded in 1980, is seeking nominations for Outstanding Recognition Awards in two areas: (1) Significant Historic Site Preservation (awarded first to Leon and Mimi Toubin for the restoration of the Orthodox Synagogue originally in Brenham and moved to Austin, in order to continue as a sacred place for Jewish worship services) and (2) Extraordinary Historic Project (awarded first to Rabbi Jimmy Kessler for the 1980 founding of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, which continues to educate, to preserve stories, and to archive Texas Jewish History).

TJHS now seeks your help to identify and honor those individuals who have made a significant and lasting impact on the preservation of Texas Jewish History. Only one award per year can be given in each category; but it is not mandated to be given yearly, only when an outstanding accomplishment merits the award. Recognitions as determined by TJHS Awards Committee will be presented at TJHS Spring Annual Gathering. Applications must be received by July 15, 2025 and mailed to Awards Chair, Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193 or [awardchair@txjhs.org](mailto:awardchair@txjhs.org).

## Application Form

Date of Submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Contact Information of Nominee(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Contact Information of Person(s) Recommending Nominee(s) for Consideration: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Category of nomination:

☐ Significant Historic Preservation

☐ Major Historic Project

In the packet that you will return with this sheet as your cover page, please include the following:

- Complete description of the accomplishment
- Reasons that you are submitting this nomination and how you became aware of this accomplishment
- Pictures and other documentation
- Impact of this accomplishment and how it has and will continue to make a difference now and in the future on the ongoing story of the Jews of Texas
- Short bio of nominee(s)

Thank you for helping us recognize deserving individuals!

*Send applications to: Awards Chair, Texas Jewish Historical Society,  
P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193 or [awardchair@txjhs.org](mailto:awardchair@txjhs.org).*

*[txjhs.org](http://txjhs.org)*



# The Texas Jewish Historical Society Grant Application

The mission of the Texas Jewish Historical Society is to expand and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Jewish presence in Texas and the history of Jews from their first arrival in the State to the present.

We solicit applications for research projects that are in this spirit.

On the form below or online, please show how your project meets our mission.

## Application Form

The Texas Jewish Historical Society will consider applications from individuals and non-profit organizations in any written or visual media. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and Description of project.

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Briefly outline personal and professional background information that support this application.

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What is the anticipated budget for the project? Are you seeking additional support from elsewhere?

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Please detail the timeline of your project.

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Completed project must acknowledge TJHS support. A copy or account of the completed project should be submitted to the Society's archive at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

*Send applications to: TJHS Grant Committee: P.O. Box 10193, Austin TX 78766-0193, or email to [grantchair@txjhs.org](mailto:grantchair@txjhs.org) or go to [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org) and click on "Apply for a Grant" at the top of the page.*





## Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund

Early in his rabbinical education and career, Rabbi Kessler lamented the absence of significant records of the Texas Jewish experience in local, state, and university libraries. His frustration turned to action when in 1980 in San Antonio he organized a meeting of like-minded Texans for what became the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

TJHS continues to expand and share the understanding of the Jewish presence in Texas through education and outreach.

The Kessler Fund is an inducement to share the incredible history of Jews in Texas with a broader community through an ever-expanding scope of projects such as invitations to renowned speakers to the TJHS Annual Gatherings, research grants to university students in Jewish studies, partnering with other organizations to expand educational programs for young people, piquing the interests of people from all religions to the richness of Texas Jewish history, and more. This Fund is a long-term commitment to the legacy of Jimmy Kessler for which \$250,000 has been set as a launch goal.

TJHS appreciates all donations, at any level, to honor the legacy of Jimmy Kessler. The Texas Jewish Historical Society, Inc., is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible within limits of the law.

### ***Suggested donation levels:***

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| \$25,000 or above | Platinum |
| \$10,000 - 24,999 | Gold     |
| \$5,000 - 9,999   | Silver   |
| \$2,500 - 4,999   | Sapphire |
| \$1,000 - 2,499   | Ruby     |
| \$18 - 999        | Diamond  |

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Donation Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Donor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I give permission to use my name for publication in Kessler Fund Donor List.  
☐ I prefer that my donation remains Anonymous.

Mailing Address of Donor(s): *(All contact information is required)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Option to honor or memorialize family member or friend with your Kessler Fund donation:**

In honor / In memory of (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address to send acknowledgment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send this completed donation form, along with your bank check, to: Texas Jewish Historical Society,  
P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193 or go to [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org) and click on "Give to Kessler Fund"

*Texas Jewish Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.  
Contributions to TJHS are tax deductible within the limits of the law.*



# TJHS Board of Trustees

## Officers

### *President*

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# Texas Jewish Historical Society

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